Compensation for workers in the Road Transport Sector

1697. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need to fund compensation for workers in the road transport sector who lose their lives on the highway or are physically handicapped due to accidents;

(b) whether it is a fact that thousands of lives are lost on the National Highways every year, especially of drivers and working class people;

(c) what are the reasons that Government are ignoring their plight;

(d) whether States can be encouraged to set up a fund with matching grants from the Central Government to attend to this need;

(e) what steps Government are taking to improve national highway safety and reduce the carnage on roads; and

(f) whether it is a fact that no facilities have come up for workers on commercial vehicles along the highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (f) It is a fact that thousands of lives are lost on the National Highways every year. Government are aware of the need to heighten road safety consciousness and in this regard, have taken the following main measures:—

1. Stricter requirements for issue of driving licences.

2. Formal training in driving in a driving school has been made a pre-requisite for issuance of licences to drive transport vehicles.

3. Maximum speed limits have been prescribed.

4. Stringent provision for compulsory inspection of vehicles.

5. Prescribing minimum technical qualifications for the officers of motor vehicles departments inspecting the vehicles.

6. Stringent penalities for unauthorise driving of vehicles, overspeeding, reckless driving and for violations relating to carriage of hazardous and dangerous goods, overloading of vehicles etc.

7. Efforts are made to improve the condition of roads so as to facilitate smooth flow of traffic.

8. Setting up of truck parking complexes/lay-byes.

The Workmen's Compensation Act provides for payment of compensation in the case of disablement or death resulting from accident arising out of and in the course of employment. It is applicable to drivers and workmen employed in connection with the loading or unloading of vehicles. The Act is based on the principle of employer's liability and is administered by the respective State Governments.

Deaths due to road accidents in the Country

1698. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of deaths due to road accidents in the country during the year 1990; and

(b) the places with largest number of such deaths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) As per information received from States, an estimated 55013 persons were killed in road accidents in the country during 1990.